DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 023 646 TE 000 391

By-Palmer, Louis H., Jr.
Intellectual Honesty.
Tilton School English Dept., NH.
Pub Date Feb 68
Note-17p.
EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.95
Descriptors-*Academic Standards, *Composition (Literary), Discipline Problems, *English Instruction, Moral Issues, Moral Values, *Plagiarism

One of the principal aims of a quality education is a relationship of trust between a student and his teachers and peers. The student's signature on his work should indicate to his teachers that any indebtedness for materials--any word-for-word copying, paraphrasing, usage of "apt" terms, or any mosaic woven into his work from randomly-gathered statements--has been acceptably acknowledged and identified to clarify what is the student's own work and what has been borrowed from others. The student should acknowledge to what extent he has prepared and proofread his own papers, given or received help, and made use of tutors or other aids. He should understand that plagiarism in any form not only indicates a flagrant disregard for the ethical and moral code governing the welfare of the academic community and a serious breach of personal integrity, but also constitutes an ignorance of form, for which he will still be held responsible. (Included are examples which illustrate the misuse of source materials) (JB)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

INTELLECTUAL HONESTY

ED023646

English Department
Tilton School
Tilton, New Hampshire
February, 1968
Louis H. Palmer, Jr.
Chairman

TE 000 391

INTELLECTUAL HONESTY

Honesty is a relationship of trust and understanding between two people or between a person and a group. Specifically intellectual honesty is such a relationship of trust and understanding between a student and others -- his fellow students or especially his teachers. Cornell University has put it this way:

> Education at its best, whether conducted in seminar, laboratory, or lecture hall, is essentially a dialogue between teacher and pupil in which questions and answers can be explored, arguments can be posed and resolved, data can be sought and evaluated. From the time of Socrates and his disciples to that of the nightly discussion on the corridor, this dialogue has been the mark and delight of the intellectual life.
>
> .....
>
> If this business is to flourish, however, and if the delight that accompanies it is to come into being, the student who enters the University must come prepared to assume certain difficult but inescapable responsibilities. Among these is the responsibility always to demonstrate the extent to which he is the master of what he is learning. He must make clear what is his and what is someone else's. His teacher must know whose words he is reading or listening to. The educational dialogue, in short, cannot be carried on between a teacher and an echo or a ghost.[1]

In simple terms, an academically honest person submits two kinds of work to his fellows or to his teachers: (1) work he has done for the first time and which is entirely his own, or (2) work he has done for the first time which combines his own thoughts, ideas, etc., and those of others, and which acknowledges in some acceptable manner the sources of all materials not his own.

---

[1] A Writer's Responsibilities, Department of English, Cornell University, September 1962, p. 3.

Once this relatively simple yet sweeping statement is understood, accepted, and followed by every student, the problem of intellectual dishonesty should be largely eliminated. Yet not all academic situations can be covered so neatly because many gray areas exist in which the issues seem to be less clear. Behind all of these problem areas, however, the cardinal rule still exists -- when a student puts his name on any material that he submits, he is attesting to the fact that it is entirely his own work unless he has acceptably acknowledged his indebtedness to others.

I.
PLAGIARISM

When the student begins to deal with work which is not entirely his own -- when he begins consciously to seek and to use the ideas and the work of others to help him in his own work -- he has taken a great stride forward in the academic world, but he faces a particularly difficult problem in maintaining his intellectual honesty, for he confronts the Satan of the academic world -- Plagiarism. Intentional plagiarism is the attempt <u>to present as one's own</u> the words, ideas, organization, or style of another; unintentional plagiarism, and it <u>is</u> plagiarism, is the same dishonest act unconsciously committed. To avoid unintentional plagiarism, a student needs to be informed, accurate, and careful. Remember that no matter how intricate the problem of plagiarism becomes -- and it becomes extremely complex at times -- it is basically a matter of intellectual honesty and, as such, is subject to the same basic rule that applies in all other areas of intellectual honesty: when a person puts his name on any work he has done, he is indicating that everything it contains is original unless he has specifically and acceptably indicated

his indebtedness to others.

Some of the commonest types of problems encountered in this area are illustrated and explained by Harold C. Martin and Richard M. Ohmann in the revised edition of The Logic and Rhetoric of Exposition. This definition is so well done that we have secured permission to reproduce it here.

A DEFINITION OF PLAGIARISM*
By Harold C. Martin

> The academic counterpart of the bank embezzler and of the manufacturer who mislabels his product is the plagiarist, the student or scholar who leads his reader to believe that what he is reading is the original work of the writer when it is not. If it could be assumed that the distinction between plagiarism and honest use of sources is perfectly clear in everyone's mind, there would be no need for the explanation which follows; merely the warning with which this definition concludes would be enough. But it is apparent that sometimes men of good will draw the suspicion of guilt upon themselves (and, indeed, are guilty) simply because they are not aware of the illegitimacy of certain kinds of "borrowing" and of the procedures for correct identification of materials other than those gained through independent research and reflection.
>
> The spectrum is a wide one. At one end there is word-for-word copying of another's writing without enclosing the copied passage in quotation marks and identifying it in a footnote, both of which are necessary. (This includes, of course, the copying of all or any part of another student's paper.) It hardly seems possible that anyone of college age or more could do that without clear intent to deceive. At the other end there is the almost casual slipping in of a particularly apt term which one has come across in reading and which so admirably expresses one's opinion that one is tempted to make it personal property. Between these poles there are degrees and degrees, but they may be roughly placed in two groups. Close to outright and blatant deceit -- but more the result, perhaps, of laziness than of bad intent -- is the patching together of random jottings made in the course of reading, generally without careful identification of their source, and then woven into the text, so that the

---

*From The Logic and Rhetoric of Exposition by Harold C. Martin and Richard M. Ohmann. Copyright (c) 1957, 1958 by Harold C. Martin. Copyright (c) 1963 by Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. Reproduced by permission of Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc. TO ERIC AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING UNDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE U.S. OFFICE OF EDUCATION. FURTHER REPRODUCTION OUTSIDE THE ERIC SYSTEM REQUIRES PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNER."

result is a mosaic of other people's ideas and words, the writer's sole contribution being the cement to hold the pieces together. Indicative of more effort and, for that reason, somewhat closer to honesty, though still dishonest, is the paraphrase, an abbreviated (and often skillfully prepared) restatement of someone else's analysis or conclusion without acknowledgment that another person's text has been the basis for recapitulation.

The examples given below should make clear the dishonest and the proper use of source material. If instances occur which these examples do not seem to cover, conscience will in all likelihood be prepared to supply advice.

THE SOURCE

> The importance of the Second Treatise of Government printed in this volume is such that without it we should miss some of the familiar features of our own government. It is safe to assert that the much criticized branch known as the Supreme Court obtained its being as a result of Locke's insistence upon the separation of powers; and that the combination of many powers in the hands of the executive under the New Deal has still to encounter opposition because it is contrary to the principles enunciated therein, the effect of which is not spent, though the relationship may not be consciously traced. Again we see the crystallizing force of Locke's writing. It renders explicit and adapts to the British politics of his day the trend and aim of writers from Languet and Bodin through Hooker and Grotius, to say nothing of the distant ancients, Aristotle and the Stoic school of natural law. It sums up magistrally the arguments used through the ages to attack authority vested in a single individual, but it does so from the particular point of view engendered by the Revolution of 1688 and is in harmony with the British scene and mental climate of the growing bourgeoisie of that age. Montesquieu and Rousseau, the framers of our own Declaration of Independence, and the statesmen (or should we say merchants and speculators?) who drew up the Constitution have reechoed its claims for human liberty, for the separation of powers, for the sanctity of private property. In the hands of these it has been the quarry of liberal doctrines; and that it has served the Socialist theory of property based on labor is final proof of its breadth of view.
>
> Charles L. Sherman, "Introduction" to John Locke, Treatise of Civil Government and A Letter Concerning Toleration.

1. WORD-FOR-WORD PLAGIARIZING

It is not hard to see the importance of the Second Treatise of Government to our own democracy. Without it we should miss some of the most familiar features of our own government. It is safe to assert that the much criticized branch known as

> the Supreme Court obtained its being as a result of Locke's insistence upon the separation of powers; and that the combination of many powers in the hands of the executive under the New Deal has still to encounter opposition because it is contrary to the principles enunciated therein, the effect of which is not spent, though the relationship may not be consciously traced. The framers of our own Declaration of Independence and the statesmen who drew up the Constitution have re-echoed its claims for human liberty, for the separation of powers, for the sanctity of private property. All these are marks of the influence of Locke's Second Treatise on our own way of life.

In this example, after composing half of a first sentence, the writer copies exactly what is in the original text, leaving out the center section of the paragraph and omitting the names of Montesquieu and Rousseau where he takes up the text again. The last sentence is also the writer's own.

If the writer had enclosed all the copied text in quotation marks and had identified the source in a footnote, he would not have been liable to the charge of plagiarism; a reader might justifiably have felt that the writer's personal contribution to the discussion was not very significant, however.

2. THE MOSAIC

> The crystallizing force of Locke's writing may be seen in the effect his Second Treatise of Government had in shaping some of the familiar features of our own government. That much criticized branch known as the Supreme Court and the combination of many powers in the hands of the executive under the New Deal are modern examples. But even the foundations of our state--the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution--have re-echoed its claims for human liberty, for the separation of powers, for the sanctity of private property. True, the influence of others is also marked in our Constitution--from the trend and aim of writers like Languet and Bodin, Hooker and Grotius, to say nothing of Aristotle and the Stoic school of natural law; but the fundamental influence is Locke's Treatise, the very quarry of liberal doctrines.

Note how the following phrases have been lifted out of the original text and moved into new patterns:

> crystallizing force of Locke's writing
>
> some of the familiar features of our own government
>
> much criticized branch known as the Supreme Court
>
> combination of many powers in the hands of the executive under the New Deal

have re-echoed its claims for human liberty. . .property

from the trend and aim. . .Grotius

to say nothing of Aristotle and. . .natural law

quarry of liberal doctrines

As in the first example, there is really no way of legitimizing such a procedure. To put every stolen phrase within quotation marks would produce an almost unreadable, and quite worthless, text.

3. THE PARAPHRASE

PARAPHRASE: One can safely say that the oft-censured
ORIGINAL: It is safe to assert that the much criticized

Supreme Court really owes its existence to the Lockeian .
. . . Court obtained its being as a result of Locke's

demand that powers in government be kept separate;
insistence upon the separation of powers;

equally one can say that the allocation of varied and
and that the combination of many

widespread authority to the President during the era of
powers in the hands of the executive under

the New Deal has still to encounter opposition because
the New Deal has still to encounter opposition because

it is contrary to the principles enunciated therein.
it is contrary to the principles enunciated therein. . . .

Once more it is possible to note the way in which
Again we see

Locke's writing clarified existing opinion.
the crystallizing force of Locke's writing.

The foregoing interlinear presentation shows clearly how the writer has simply traveled along with the original text, substituting approximately equivalent terms except where his understanding fails him, as it does with "crystallizing," or where the ambiguity of the original is too great a tax on his ingenuity for him to proceed, as it is with "to encounter opposition. . . consciously traced" in the original.

Such a procedure as the one shown in this example has its uses; it is valuable for the student's own understanding of the passage, for one thing; and it may be valuable for the reader as well.

How, then, may it properly be used? The procedure is simple. The writer might begin the second sentence with: "As Sherman notes in the introduction to his edition of the Treatise, one can safely say. . ." and conclude the paraphrased passage with a footnote giving the additional identification necessary. Or he might indicate directly the exact nature of what he is doing, in this fashion: "To paraphrase Sherman's comment. . ." and conclude that also with a footnote indicator.

In point of fact, the source here used does not particularly lend itself to honest paraphrase, with the exception of that one sentence which the paraphraser above copied without change except for abridgment. The purpose of paraphrase should be to simplify or to throw a new and significant light on a text; it requires much skill if it is to be honestly used and should rarely be resorted to by the student except for the purpose, as was suggested above, of his personal enlightenment.

4. THE "APT" TERM

The Second Treatise of Government is a veritable quarry of liberal doctrines. In it the crystallizing force of Locke's writing is markedly apparent. The cause of human liberty, the principle of separation of powers, and the inviolability of private property--all three, major dogmas of American constitutionalism--owe their presence in our Constitution in large part to the remarkable Treatise which first appeared around 1685 and was destined to spark, within three years, a revolution in the land of its author's birth and, ninety years later, another revolution against that land.

Here the writer has not been able to resist the appropriation of two striking terms--"quarry of liberal doctrines" and "crystallizing force"; a perfectly proper use of the terms would have required only the addition of a phrase: "The Second Treatise of Government is, to use Sherman's suggestive expression, a 'quarry of liberal doctrines.' In it the 'crystallizing force'--the term again is Sherman's--of Locke's writing is markedly apparent. . . ."

Other phrases in the text above--"the cause of human liberty," "the principle of separation of powers," "the inviolability of private property"--are clearly drawn directly from the original source but are so much matters in the public domain, so to speak, that no one could reasonably object to their reuse in this fashion.

Since one of the principal aims of a college education is the development of intellectual honesty, it is obvious that plagiarism is a particularly serious offense and the punishment for it is commensurately severe. What a penalized student suffers can never really be known by anyone but himself; what the student who plagiarizes and "gets away with it" suffers is less public and probably less acute, but the corruptness of his act, the disloyalty and baseness it entails, must inevitably leave an ineradicable mark on him as well as on the institution of which he is privileged to be a member.

It should be clear from the forgoing comments that the use of another's words and ideas in the proper way is a process which demands care and precision on the part of the student. He must constantly be aware of what he has borrowed and must make absolutely sure that he has indicated clearly and correctly to his reader what is not originally his. Yet the matter is not so clear cut as it may seem at first glance, for even though the student may be extremely cautious in this matter, there are gray areas of uncertainty.

One area of difficulty is that of the student's bringing forth from his memory an idea or phrasing which is, in fact, another person's. This is very easy to do especially if one has gone over the same source several times. Such is an instance of unintentional plagiarism. In this kind of situation, the factor of intent is crucial in deciding whether the student has been intellectually dishonest. It may well be that the student in all honesty did not know that the material in question was not originally his. Two points, nevertheless, are to be noted in this situation: (1) the burden of proof lies with the writer. He must prove to the satisfaction of those concerned that he did not intend to deceive (an almost impossible task); (2) even if there is no dishonest intent, the fact remains that plagiarism has occurred. An additional result of such instances is often the erosion of the relationship of trust between student and instructor. This is an unfortunate result, but one which is hard to avoid, and one which must be resolved in as reasonable a manner as possible.

Another area of difficulty involves the problem of what material needs to be documented. Very few of us have discovered much about the world that is original with us. Most of what we know we get from others. What can we ever say, then, that would <u>not</u> need to be documented because it

is truly original? It is in this area that the concept of "common knowledge" is applicable. Facts which are common knowledge need not be documented. But what determines "common knowledge?" Legally, the appearance of the material in two or more published sources constitutes common knowledge, but unless the student plans to spend additional hours scrounging through the library, this is not a very useful determinant. Perhaps a better guide to follow is to document anything which one has had to look up.

Facts which a student can write about freely without referring to his notes or to any other printed source have become his and ordinarily need no documentation. But a problem which often arises involves the handling of facts which one has learned in the process of research. A student, for example, might do a research paper on the principles of atomic fission. In the course of his research he may find in many places the same basic description of how atomic fission operates. By the time he begins to write the paper, he may be so familiar with this process that he does not have to refer to his notes to write about it. The fact remains, however, that he did not know this when he began his research, and so <u>for this paper</u> he would have to footnote this material. Obviously this is an ambiguous area, and the best guide to follow is to document when one is in doubt even though such acknowledgements may seem to clutter the paper. Such cluttering may, in part, be avoided by following this rule: any verifiable matter of fact once noted in a paper may be considered common knowledge for the balance of that paper.

The rule of "common knowledge" applies only to matters of verifiable fact. But students often wish to use opinions or critical judgments of others with which they agree, in writing their own papers. Can this be

done without footnoting each time? The guide: a matter of opinion or critical judgment must be repeatedly footnoted unless the student has supported his agreement already and has adopted the position himself. Let us assume, for example, that a student in writing a paper on Byron comes across an article that comments that Byron uses Nature in his poetry as an escape from the confusion of society. The student may agree with this on the basis of his reading and want to use the point in his paper. He can use it in two ways. First, he may use it without explanation or support as often as he wishes, so long as he acknowledges the source each time. Second, he may introduce the comment, acknowledge the source, and then go on to support the comment by reference to Byron's works, showing where and how the comment is applicable. Having done this, he is free to use that comment again <u>in that paper</u> without documentation because he has supported it and has adopted the same critical position.

From even these few remarks it is clear that the problems involved in avoiding plagiarism can become very knotty indeed. Even though the problem is basically one of intellectual honesty and follows the basic rule for intellectual honesty, that is acknowledge what is not originally one's own, we have seen that one can in all apparent honesty still be guilty of plagiarism. Once again, a good rule to follow is to document in any uncertain situation. Furthermore, it seems only common sense to recommend that if the student encounters a situation that he is not sure how to handle, he contact his instructor for further clarification.

II.
OTHER AREAS OF APPLICATION

While the area of plagiarism is perhaps the most frequently discussed problem involving intellectual honesty and may be one of its most

involved and complex aspects, there are other areas of academic life in which intellectual honesty plays a key role in the success or failure of the "academic dialogue." Before going on to discuss some of these areas and the problems that one may encounter, it might be well to recall the demands that intellectual honesty places on the student. These are that he submit two kinds of work to his fellows or to his teachers: (1) work he has done for the first time and which is entirely his own, or (2) work he has done for the first time which combines his own thoughts, ideas, etc., and those of others, and which acknowledges in some acceptable manner the source of all material not his own.

GIVING AND RECEIVING HELP -- Normally, intellectual honesty means that the student does his own work and neither gives assistance to others nor receives it from other persons or from previously prepared material. This is the normal expectation for tests, quizzes, homework, and papers, whether done in class or outside. Obviously there are numerous exceptions to this rule, but the fact that there are exceptions ought not to allow the student to forget the fact that unless a specific exception is made, it is assumed that he has done his work unaided.

One exception that immediately comes to mind is the "open book" test, in which the instructor allows text material to be brought in for use during the test. Unless specified otherwise, the text is all that may be used. No prepared notes are normally allowed in this kind of situation.

A second exception to the normal "no help" rule is the in-class paper, report, or test in which the student is allowed to use prepared notes. The point to remember here is that notes are what is allowed--not previously prepared drafts of the essay or answer. This type of assignment is designed for different purposes and is graded differently from an

outside preparation, and intellectual honesty demands that what the student hands in at the end of the period should be the result of his work in that period and not a recopied version of something he spent several hours preparing beforehand.

A third exception is a situation which involves honest collaboration on a project. This is an exception, and as such it must first of all be acceptable to the instructor. In physics, for example, two students may form a team to carry out experiments together, and they may use each other's data in writing up their reports. Such reports are obviously honest collaborations. For work like this there is a simple rule: Any joint authorship is to be acknowledged. Obviously intellectual honesty demands that if no collaboration is allowed, none take place.

Yet another exception involves a poem or other piece of creative writing that a student may have written and rewritten, not once, not twice, but many times. Certainly the seventeenth version of this writing is just as much an original creation of the author's as his first version, and he may in all honesty submit it as his own. One time when he should not do so comes when his instructor has asked him to submit something new, something which has not been rewritten or revised. In addition, he should not submit such a creative work (nor any other work) a second time, for example to another teacher, without first receiving prior permission to do so and then acknowledging on the paper that he is doing so.

PREPARING AND "PROOFREADING" PAPERS -- Another gray area is involved in the preparation and revision of papers done outside of class. As always, the basic work is to be done by the student alone. How much help he may receive rests with the instructor making the assignment. The instructor may permit,

or even encourage, discussion of the assigned topic with others before the student does any writing. The instructor may permit or encourage a student to ask another student or another teacher to answer specific questions about specific material or about a particular phrase or sentence in the student writer's work.

The area of giving and receiving assistance that poses the greatest difficulty is that of "proofreading." Many instructors forbid this. Another instructor may permit or encourage the student to read his paper aloud to another student or, what is more likely, permit another student to read the writer's paper aloud to him before the final draft. The question that faces both the proofreader and writer now becomes quite knotty. How much assistance may the proofreader give and the writer receive and still maintain their academic honesty? Perhaps the best answer is that the proofreader should restrict himself to pointing out general errors and weaknesses and leave corrections to the writer. He is certainly free to make his own personal comments on the paper (e.g. "That doesn't make any sense." or "That's a pretty poor sentence.") or its mechanics (e.g. "Your comma usage is poor." or "You have several spelling errors.") The important point to remember is that the "proofreader" is not to do the writer's job of correction for him. Specific instructors will vary in their ideas and attitudes about what constitutes legitimate assistance on assignments and may permit more or less than the above. Thus the "proofreader's" first task is to find out from the writer how much help he may legitimately receive. But whatever the case, the teacher's instructions should be clearly understood and followed. If the student hands in work under his signature, the teacher assumes that the conditions of the assignment have been followed. In other words, it is the student's obligation to understand and fulfill the

conditions of the assignment.

STUDENT TUTORS -- Student tutors face a unique difficulty in maintaining their intellectual honesty, as do those who use student tutors for assistance. A tutor must remember that his function is to provide assistance to students in mastering material, not to do their assignments for them. In addition to explaining material to the student, the tutor may in good conscience have the student begin work on his assignment as a way of determining his grasp of the material. In case of continued difficulty, the tutor may work through representative problems with the student explaining procedures as he does so. The point to remember is that the tutor's task is essentially one of instruction. If he allows himself to become merely a corrector of homework or a proofreader -- which is by far the easier course -- then he is compromising his responsibility and the entire tutoring program, as well as doing a disservice to those he is trying to help.

The student using student tutors should likewise recognize their function and his own responsibility to use the tutoring system properly. Any assistance that a student receives on assignments from student tutors ought to be clearly indicated when the assignment is submitted.

III.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As has been pointed out throughout the preceeding comments, the writer must not only indicate his indebtedness to others, he must be sure to indicate it in some acceptable fashion. The failure to give complete information in an acceptable form is nearly as serious a problem as failing to give any information at all. While it is not the purpose of this paper to become involved with the intricacies of documentation, a few words on the handling of acknowledgements are necessary.

For all work submitted to the English Department the proper form for specific acknowledgements will be found in Student's Guide For Writing College Papers by Kate L. Turabian which is available in the library and the school bookstore. In addition to information on specific forms of footnotes and bibliography, the book contains further information on many of the problems previously mentioned in this paper. Other departments may have their own preferences regarding specific form for footnotes, but much of what Miss Turabian's book has to offer will be applicable in all areas.

Remember that a footnote does nothing more than identify the source from which the writer has derived material. A simple footnote gives no indication whether it is the facts themselves, their arrangement, the language, the choice of examples, or the order of the argument which the writer has borrowed. In situations where the writer has borrowed more than the words of his source, an explanation of what he has borrowed ought to accompany the basic footnote entry or be in the text of the paper itself.[2]

[2]Paraphrased from A Writer's Responsibilities, Department of English, Cornell University, Ithica, New York, September 1962, p. 11.

PLAGIARISM POLICY

The faculty and administration of Tilton School regard plagiarism in any form as a flagrant disregard for the ethical and moral code governing the academic welfare of the campus community. Because it is also an extremely serious breach of personal integrity, comparable to such major indiscretions as theft, offenders can expect disciplinary action, even expulsion, consistent with the seriousness of the offense. This stand is taken with the conviction that responsible school citizens wish to countenance nothing less than the highest standards of academic and personal conduct.